

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION FOR
BIG BASIN REDWOODS STATE PARK
GENERAL PLAN
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION, POSSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS, AND
LOCATION**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The General Plan provides a long-term outline and guidelines for future proposed facilities, land use, resource policies, and management, operation, interpretation, and concession operations at Big Basin Redwoods State Park. Specific development proposals or management plans are not part of the General Plan. The General Plan and the draft environmental impact report form the first tier of environmental analysis. Future implementation of general plan proposals will occur in phases as funding becomes available, and these proposals will be subject to additional (tiered) environmental review.

The General Plan anticipates designating three primary management zones: 1) the Headquarters-Highway 236 Management Zone (transportation corridors, administration-operations, recreation and interpretive facilities), 2) the Backcountry Management Zone (wilderness and adjacent roadless areas), and 3) the Rancho del Oso-Highway 1 Management Zone (coastal access and parking, resource protection, interpretation, and recreation facilities). The General Plan will develop goals and guidelines for each zone and will also provide unit-wide goals and guidelines. The General Plan may call for the preparation of management plans covering subjects such as natural resources and sensitive species, cultural resources, park recreation, interpretation, trails, regional influences, and carrying capacity.

The following are some of the primary planning issues anticipated in this process:

This planning effort will focus on the primary question of how do we meet increasing demands for public recreation at Big Basin while also improving the protection, preservation, and management of the park's unique natural and cultural resources, and protect its special sense of place.

- **Regional influences, park connection, and communication with surrounding areas.** Opportunities may exist to improve the park's ecological, biological, recreational, and educational relationships with neighboring lands, land-uses, landowners, jurisdictions, services, and facilities.

- **Growing demand for recreational opportunities and visitor experiences.** Opportunities may exist to provide more recreational opportunities while improving protection of natural and cultural resources. Opportunities may also exist to enhance visitor experiences and better harmonize, integrate, and/or segregate equestrian, mountain bike, and hiker use of trails.
- **Visitor use impacts on resources.** Heavy and long-term visitor use in specific areas, such as the main campgrounds, may be negatively affecting ancient redwood forest and habitat for marbled murrelets. Evaluation of existing and potential developments is necessary.
- **Preservation of sensitive plant and animal species and habitats in the park.** The park is currently a refuge for as many as thirty-nine sensitive plant and animal species. Opportunities exist to enhance habitats, restore populations, and protect these and other less sensitive species. This plan may establish natural preserves to better protect significant resources within the park.
- **Wilderness classification.** Opportunities may exist to expand the existing wilderness area to better protect resource values and enhance primitive recreational experience.
- **Exotic plant and animal species management.** Exotic plant and animal species are negatively affecting the park's native plants, animals, and habitats. Guidelines are needed for proper management.
- **Fire ecology management.** Opportunities may exist to improve the park's fire ecology management program and cooperation with fire control agencies. Goals and guidelines are needed for future management plans.
- **Historic building restoration, adaptation, and use.** Preservation and adaptive use of the early 20th Century structures in the park headquarters area is a primary planning consideration. Opportunities exist for establishing a cultural resource protection zone and possible historic landmark designation.
- **Transportation, circulation, and parking.** Opportunities may exist to lessen traffic impacts on intrinsic park values and improve park entrances, circulation, and parking. Road and trail systems may need improvement to meet future park management and recreation needs.
- **Park interpretive and educational resources, programs, and facilities.** Opportunities may exist to improve the park's interpretive and educational programs and facilities, including adapting historic buildings for interpretive uses.

- **Employee housing.** Opportunities may exist to improve employee housing.
- **Park concessions.** Opportunities may exist to improve the park's visitor concession services.

POSSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

There may be temporary adverse impacts to soils, water quality and flows, wildlife and habitat, vegetation, esthetics, cultural resources, and recreational opportunities. There may be a change in traffic patterns.

There are 19 special status plant species recorded as occurring in the park or in the vicinity of the park. Of these, 3 species are listed as Federal Endangered and 2 species are listed as California Endangered.

A total of 39 sensitive animal species potentially occur in the park including 26 sensitive bird species, 5 sensitive mammal species, 3 sensitive reptile species, 2 sensitive amphibian species, and 3 sensitive fish species. Of these 39 sensitive animal species 2 species carry both Federal Endangered and California Endangered status, 5 species carry California Endangered status, and 1 species carries Federal Endangered status.

Development and public use might displace or disturb these plant and animal species as well as redwood groves. Generally, long-term impacts should be beneficial as resource management is implemented and development and intensive public use is relocated or redirected to less sensitive areas.

LOCATION

Big Basin Redwoods State Park is located principally in Santa Cruz County and marginally in San Mateo County. The Park's Headquarters Area is accessed via State Highway 236 and the coastal access to Waddell Beach and the Rancho del Oso area is via State Highway 1.